

Final Report: Internship at FU Berlin

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Pilot Project: Creating a User-Friendly Energy Monitoring System at FU Berlin

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At the partner university, I was able to connect my academic background with my personal interest in sustainability. I noticed that FU Berlin website had a lot of missing components in their sustainability unit website, and thought that it would be beneficial to have a page dedicated to finding out the campus' energy usage information. Katrin Risch, who was the program manager for the University Alliance for Sustainability programme, was my main contact person.

The most interesting aspect of my stay in Berlin was that it was similar, yet so different from Vancouver. FU Berlin and UBC are two international universities dedicated to sustainability, yet they were so different in terms of what they were good at, where they need to focus on, and what kind of sustainability initiatives they have put on previously. For example, I noticed that because of the well set-up plastic and glass bottle recycling system in Berlin, there was no need for initiatives to hold campaigns to reduce, recycle and reuse, which is an initiative that UBC students on campus still make sure to focus on. Yet, the campus did not have a lot of resources or information online or across campus showcasing the campus' energy consumption level and how they can make the campus more sustainable to gear towards a carbon-free campus. This is the part I wanted to focus on my internship.

It was a challenging project to dive into mainly because I encountered a lot of unexpected situations. Getting data to display real time energy content on the FU website was a lot more work than I had originally imagined, and having no experience with back-end web development made the situation even more difficult. In particular, the restrictive content management system of FU Berlin website

meant that I had to figure out a new way to display what I had built in my local machine to the server. With the help of Katrin and other IT support individuals, I was able to achieve my original goal of displaying real time data on the FU website by calling for real-time data from Dezem energy company's website, program a separate excel datasheet to calculate the campus' monthly energy performance that could be connected to the main database and make visual displays of traffic light that could be implemented onto the unit's website.

The first two weeks at the university were mostly spent trying to start the original project I had in mind, and modifying it after analyzing what was possible and what was not within the time frame of my internship. While I was blocked from proceeding with this project, I worked on redesigning posters for the campus' travelling exhibition themed on sustainability to make it more eye-catching. Aside from the projects of the internship, I had the opportunity to tour the FU Berlin campus, eat the climate meal at the vegetarian canteen, and learn about all the open opportunities FU Berlin campus and Germany as a whole had in sustainability.

By visiting Berlin and experiencing the German culture as a local, I realized that there is a lot to learn from each other's cultural differences. The research stay broadened my understanding of sustainability in an international context. I noticed that each city's culture and policies reflect the people's attitude towards sustainability. By bringing about perspectives from one's own culture and taking back innovative ideas from the partner institution's, both places can mutually benefit and step forward towards creating a sustainable society.